



News from

# Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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## Rep. Kind Fights to Achieve More Special Education Funds for Wisconsin's Schools

*Improved Special Education Bill Passes House on Track to President's Desk*

**Washington, D.C.** – Today, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), a member of the House Subcommittee on Education Reform, praised the passage of the federal special education law aimed at ensuring that special needs children get the same opportunities as others. Special education services are the fastest growing component of schools' budgets, and in addition to voting for the bill, Rep. Kind has led efforts to improve the federal law regulating special education and has consistently advocated for increased federal support of educational services provided to children with disabilities.

"It is our obligation to ensure that all our children receive quality educational opportunities, regardless of physical or developmental ability," said Kind. "To truly guarantee that 'no child will be left behind', the federal government must take greater responsibility to live up to its commitment to fully support students with special needs, and to meet the needs of schools struggling to be fair and inclusive. Such a commitment will also free up much needed resources of states and local school districts to meet their education priorities."

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), enacted in 1975, requires the federal, state and local governments to share the expense of educating children with disabilities. The improved bill calls for the federal government to pay for 40% of a state's excess cost of educating children with disabilities by the year 2011. In 2004, the federal government contributed only 19%, \$10.1 billion, to school districts.

Wisconsin, for example, is calculated to receive \$183.6 million from the federal government for fiscal year 2004 under current IDEA funding levels. Increasing the federal funding to 40% would provide the state with approximately \$410 million and free up local resources that could be used to meet school construction and modernization costs, reduce class sizes, and provide quality training to teachers.

"Our country has a long, proud history in striving to provide every child the very best public education possible, so that they have the chance to go on and achieve great things," concluded Kind. "I remain committed to making sure that Congress honors its 30 year old pledge to children, and to states and school districts, and fully funds special education when its time to determine the funding level."